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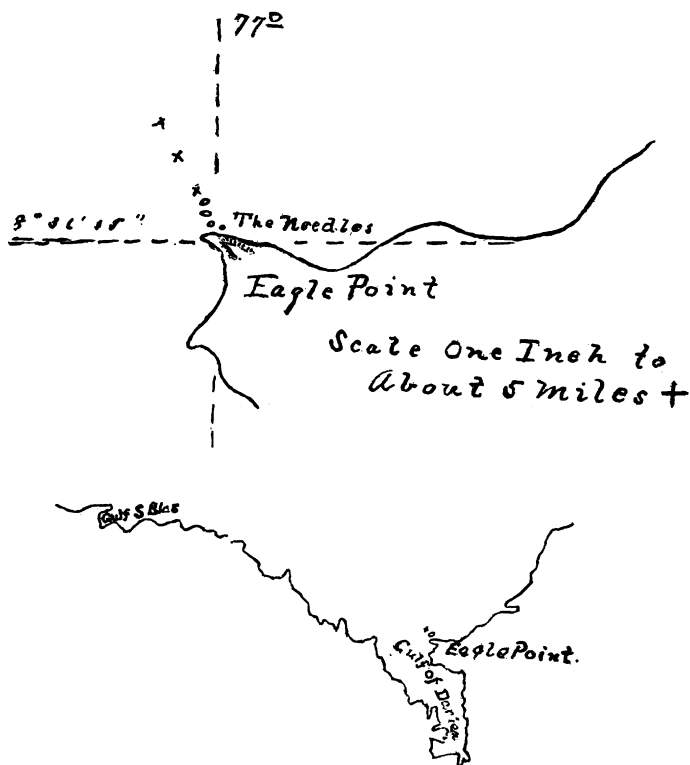
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NOTES OF SOME DANGEROUS ROCKS OFF THE GULF OF DARIEN.

In a recent exploration of the regions to the south of the Gulf of Darien I noted while on my way to that country a series of sunken rocks off Eagle Point. These rocks are locally called the Needles, and are considered very dangerous to the small craft called *barcontonas*, trading along the Colombian coast. Occasionally a larger vessel passes Eagle Point, and trading ships, after



OUTLINE OF POSITION OF SUNKEN ROCKS OFF EAGLE POINT AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE GULF OF DARIEN.

All water above $8^{\circ} 36' 15''$ north and in sight of Eagle Point may be considered dangerous.

Approximate position of rocks marked by ooo. Possible extension of rocks as noted by waves breaking in a quiet sea marked by xxx.

working their way along the San Blas coast, are sometimes seen on their way to Cartagena. The country is a rich one, and it is

probable that foreign sails will some day be more frequent in these waters; and if there should be a war at any time affecting American interests, these regions would require careful watching, because of the ease with which supplies and munitions could be transported between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans *via* the Atrato and San Juan rivers of Colombia.

This gives a special interest to the waters off the Gulf of Darien. An examination of the charts of that region shows that the rocks off Eagle Point have been overlooked. A sand bank two fathoms under water is noted just off the Point, but all else is put down as deep soundings, and a commander would be justified in standing in close to shore and considering himself in very safe water; but in reality he would be in a most dangerous position.

Locally, it is claimed that these rocks extend for eight to ten miles off shore, and that many of them can scarcely be seen, especially when the tide is up. It can be stated with confidence that all water in sight of Eagle Point and above $8^{\circ} 36' 15''$ is dangerous. Approaching from the east, a careful watch should be maintained till the eastern side of the Gulf of Darien can be seen to the south below Eagle Point.

Going west, the rocks are probably passed when the ridges and sand banks along Eagle Point are to the stern of the ship, but the position on the eastern side may be dangerous anywhere in sight of the Point.

When I saw these rocks the water was quiet. We were making our way along the coast in a dilapidated steam-tug, and though the sailors were a careless lot, at this dangerous point the engine was slowed down. Presently I saw a ripple in the water just beside the tug as if a large fish had come near the surface, a wave rose up and broke; that was all. After we had gone a little further, I saw a larger ripple, then suddenly fine, slender-pointed rocks appeared out of the water, the waves broke around them, and they disappeared again.

I could see waves rising up at intervals toward the northwest, indicating the presence of rocks, and should say that the native sailors are correct in claiming that at this point dangerous water is found for some distance off shore.

After the tug had made its way carefully for a time, we saw the water inside Eagle Point, and went on again at such speed as could be made, having passed the rocks in safety.

FRANCIS CHILD NICHOLAS.

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